**IT Applications**

**Onscreen design elements, p 233**

**Onscreen solutions need to be carefully designed to create user-friendly onscreen productions.**

**From pg 234 complete the following in relation to the design elements to consider.**

1. **Proportion**
   1. What is meant by the hierarchy of a page?

The hierarchy of a page refers to the system in which things are ranked by order of importance one above or below each other. The designer must ensure that the most important pieces of information have prominence over the less important pieces of information.

* 1. What factors affect the visual hierarchy of a screen?

The proportion or relative sizing of fonts and graphics will affect the hierarchy of a screen. The hierarchy can also be affected by things like the positioning of particular elements, including the whitespace around objects, formatting of fonts and the use of animation.

1. **Orientation**
   1. What does orientation refer to?

Orientation refers to the direction and aspect of elements in an onscreen page. When designing the layout the interface designer will have to consider the orientation of all elements that will appear on the page.

* 1. List some typical considerations for orientation of screen elements.

Some typical considerations for the orientation of screen elements are:

* Considering the element in relation to all other objects on the screen and to the overall screen
* Considering which way elements such as the logo should orientated (e.g. should it be mirrored)
* Consider how text should be aligned
* Consider whether a frame on a website should bet at the top, bottom, left or right of the screen
* Consider the size of the onscreen page

1. **Clarity and consistency**
   1. What does clarity refer to?

Clarity refers to how clearly the information on a screen is presented, and how well a user can distinguish between visual elements on the screen.

* 1. List characteristics of a clear screen.

The characteristics of a clear screen are:

* It’s not overcrowded with objects and features that make it difficult for users to find the information they need
* The font, and the chosen size, is clear and readable by the user
* The graphics and videos have enough resolution so that they are distinguishable by the user
  1. What is meant by consistency?

Consistency refers to the use of similar, repeated or predictable features on screen so that the user can navigate the information without unnecessary confusion ore error.

* 1. List elements that can be used to support the consistency of an onscreen document.

Some elements that can be used to support the consistency of an onscreen document are:

* The use of a similar layout for each different page
* Consistent use of logos, headers and footers
* Consistent use of font styles, numbering styles, search fields, and navigation icons or frames
* A colour scheme should be used

1. **Colour and contrast**
   1. What are the conventions for onscreen colours?

The conventions for onscreen colours are:

* The most easily readable colours for text are black writing on a white background
* Avoid using red and green together as colour blind people have trouble distinguishing between them, blue and brown can also be hard to read
* Limit the variety of colours on the screen
* Light or pastel shades (or white) are best choice for the background
* Avoid using bright or vivid colours unless there is an area you would like to highlight or emphasise
* Blue is the standard colour for an unvisited link, changing to purple when visited, if other colours are used for links they should be consistent
  1. What is the role of whitespace in assisting the contrast in an onscreen product?

Whitespace refers to the section of an onscreen page that is empty of colour or object. It can be used to create contrast around a chosen element, and draw the user’s eye to this area.

**Characteristics of onscreen solutions: efficient and effective user interfaces, p 238**

1. What is the user interface?

The user interface is the point at which the user interacts with an information system.

**In addition to the design elements already considered high quality user interfaces need to consider the following:**

1. **Usability and accessibility**
   1. What is meant by usability?

Usability refers to the how easy it is for the user to use the interface. For example a good interface will mean that the user does not really notice the interface itself but interacts with it intuitively.

* 1. List some factors that contribute to increased usability.

Factors that can contribute to increased usability are:

* The user should be able to focus on the information they are looking for rather than having to focus on finding the information
* An unobtrusive but clear user interface
* A screen layout that is not unnecessarily elaborate and decorative
* An interface that is founded on thoroughly planned logical information architecture
* A screen that does not contain superfluous animations
* A screen that does not have to many buttons, bullets, icons, rulers or flashing graphics
* The option to turn off any onscreen hints or help features for users who don’t require them.
  1. Which fonts are used for headings and body of document?

The fonts that are used for the headings of a document are san serif fonts, this is because they have no tail and in areas where the font will be bigger they will be easy to read. Fonts that are used in the body of a document on the other hand are serif fonts, this is because they can lead the eye and help reduce eye strain.

* 1. What is meant by accessibility?

Accessibility refers to the how accessible the information is for users. For an information system to be considered accessible the information has to be able to be accessed in a straightforward way. Users should not need to puzzle over the meaning of a button, r have to work out what an icon means.

* 1. List examples of conventional navigation symbols.

Some conventional navigation symbols are:

* A question make (?) for a help icon
* A house symbol for the home icon
* Backwards and forwards arrows to go to the previous or next page
  1. What other factors must interface designers consider?

Interface designers must also consider:

* The target audience
* How to make the information accessible for the widest possible range of viewers
* Which layout will best fit on the screen
  1. What are built in redundancies in an onscreen product?

The built in redundancies in an onscreen product are extra items that are not strictly necessary for something to function but are there as a back-up.

1. **Appropriateness and relevance.**
   1. What characteristics must an onscreen product have to meet the needs of its audience?

To meet the needs of its audience an onscreen must have the following characteristics:

* Have the right information for it audience
* A useable format
* Be timely
  1. List items to avoid.

Some items to avoid are:

* Superfluous information
* Unnecessary ‘extras’ that distract from the information being presented

**Characteristics of onscreen solutions: Characteristics of effective information architecture.**

1. What does information architecture refer to?

The information architecture refers to the way that the information is structured and the ways it can be navigated by the user.

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